



WHY WE PRAY

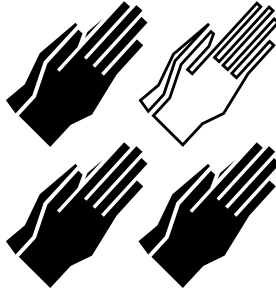
Disciple Making Studies for the Church

WHY WE PRAY

Disciple Making Studies for the Church

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Introduction

In Luke 11:1, we see Jesus doing what he had done so many times before: Take a retreat from his arduous ministry to pray and enjoy fellowship with his Father. Luke mentions that the disciples were close by and whether they heard Jesus praying audibly or saw him praying silently, the moment triggered a curiosity. “Lord, teach us to pray.” Was it Peter? John? One of the others? We don’t know, but all twelve leaned in to hear what they had been missing. John’s disciples had already received a taste of instruction on the matter, and now it was their turn. Who better to teach them than the Son of God — “Lord, teach us to pray.”

Consider how monumental this was for them. Likely, the concept of conversing with Yahweh was daunting enough but referring to him as *Father*, dare they hope they could? They had been in the front row for so much of his ministry: his miracles, sermons, and personal interactions. But at this juncture they didn’t ask, “Lord, teach us to preach.” They didn’t want to know how to heal, or produce signs, nor were they interested in knowing how to dodge the Pharisees. “Teach us to pray” was the request.

Would we have asked the same?

The goal of this study is to tap into that desire. Our hope is that this booklet would guide you in your own retreat into prayer and fellowship with the Father. Before we begin, let’s address the elephant in the room:

*Since God is Sovereign, Why Pray?*¹

¹ The biblical examples have been adapted from Matthew Waymeyer’s post, “*If God is Sovereign, Why Pray?*”

WHY WE PRAY

Let's be honest. It seems like God's sovereignty is a game changer when it comes to prayer. It follows that if God will do what he desires anyway, why pray? Why make requests or intercede? We should just rest in God's sovereignty, right?

After all, we are reminded in Isaiah 46:9–11,

*⁹ Remember the former things of old;
for I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like me,
¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning
and from ancient times things not yet done,
saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
and I will accomplish all my purpose,'
¹¹ calling a bird of prey from the east,
the man of my counsel from a far country.
I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass;
I have purposed, and I will do it.*

And the truth about God's sovereignty over His creation is taught throughout the Bible.

Psalms 115:3 says,

Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

And in Psalm 135:6,

Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.

Daniel 4:35,

All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"

Proverbs 19:21,

Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.

Disciple Making Studies for the Church

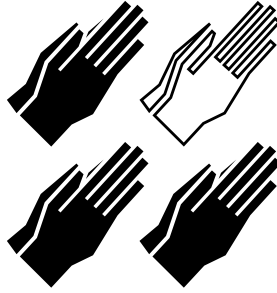
Proverbs 21:1,

*The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD;
he turns it wherever he will.*

There you have it. The end already being declared from the beginning. God accomplishing His purposes unthwarted, steering the events of world history with the impeccable timing of His will.

So why pray?

It feels theologically right to say we simply rest in God's exhaustive foreknowledge, omniscience, and absolute power, right? Not quite. Certainly, we find rest in the power and providence of God, but God did not reveal the truth of His sovereignty so we could neglect the purposes of our responsibility. There are no easy answers to some of these questions; however, it is crystal clear that prayer is crucial in the life of a Christ follower. The purpose of this little study will examine six reasons why we pray.



6 Reasons Why We Pray

1. God Commands We Pray

Not surprisingly, the first reason we pray is because God commands it in the Bible. This is clearly taught in the teachings of both Jesus and the apostle Paul. In Matthew 6:9–13, we find Jesus teaching his disciples to pray:

“Pray then like this:

*‘Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.*

¹⁰ *Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.*

¹¹ *Give us this day our daily bread,*

¹² *and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

¹³ *And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.”*

Later, Jesus instructed them on the importance of praying with persistence.

⁵ *And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves,’⁶ for*

WHY WE PRAY

a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him;⁷ and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’?⁸ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs.⁹ And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent;¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

— LUKE 11:5–13

In Luke 18:1–8, Jesus told his disciples a parable *to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart*. And when he arrived in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus instructed them, “*Pray that you may not enter temptation*” (Luke 22:40).

Paul exhorted the Thessalonians to “*pray without ceasing*” (I Thessalonians 5:17) and instructed the Philippians “*do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God*” (Philippians 4:6). He charged the Colossians, “*Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving*” (Colossians 4:2). He wrote to the Ephesians, “*praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me...*” (Ephesians 6:18–19). He urged Timothy, “*Urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people*” (I Timothy 2:1).

Plain and simple, God commands his people to pray. Too often Christians spend more time trying to figure out how prayer works than actually praying. Ignoring this aspect of the Christian life is to ignore the spiritual reality we’ve been made alive to enjoy. In fact, prayerlessness is more than just a lack of Christian integrity; it’s practical atheism, demonstrating a lack of belief in God.²

² Michael Reeves, *Enjoy Your Prayer Life* (10 Publishing, Farington, Leyland, England, 2014), 10.

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Even if we never reach a clear understanding of how prayer works in relation to God's sovereignty, God's command to pray should be all we need to respond with joyful obedience.

Reflect

Examine your view of prayer. In your view, is prayer optional for the Christ follower, or do you see prayer as an act of obedience? Do you feel you must completely understand how prayer works before you pray, or is prayer simply an act of trust and obedience to God?

2. Jesus Showed Us How to Pray

A second reason we pray is that it was modeled by Jesus who many times “*would withdraw to desolate places and pray*” (Luke 5:16). Prayer was integral to his life and ministry. While it might seem to be a far-fetched notion that we could actually pray like Jesus prayed, the truth is we can. Jesus lived, died, and was raised that we might have an intimate relationship with the Father. And it's our joy to be made alive to God in such ways, because as Michael Reeves says, “Prayer is learning to enjoy what Jesus has always enjoyed.”³ Here are a few observations about the Lord's prayer life in the gospels.

a. Jesus Prepared a Time and a Place to Pray

During his ministry in Galilee, Mark records, “*And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed*” (Mark 1:35). After feeding the five thousand, Jesus sent the crowds away and “*went up on the mountain by himself to pray*” (Matthew 14:23). On the night before he chose the twelve disciples, Jesus “*went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God*” (Luke 6:12). Later Luke refers to a time when Jesus “*took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray*” (Luke 9:28).

³ Michael Reeves, *Enjoy Your Prayer Life*, 21.

WHY WE PRAY

The regularity with which Jesus prayed involved making the time and preparing a place. Certainly, prayers to God can happen at any time and in any environment, but intentionally devoting time to pray offers us tremendous benefit. As John Piper notes, “If you want to have a vital hour-by-hour, spontaneous walk with God, you must also have disciplined regular meetings with God for prayer.”⁴

This world is constantly competing for our time and affection. And contrary to our predictions, the dawning of technology has not helped slow things down. Quite the opposite, our world is frenetically busier. Amid the chaos, we find ourselves spread thin and crunched for time as we attempt to make good on commitments and prioritize church, family, and career.

Like all disciplines, prayer does not happen in a vacuum. To be a person of prayer means cultivating other healthy habits that encourage its effort. Consider how a healthy prayer life might be connected to the following areas: physical health, sleeping and eating habits, workload and sabbath rest, etc. These life rhythms are significant to God, and if He cares about them, we should as well. In fact, we might find that focusing on certain physical habits will have an eventual impact on certain spiritual habits and vice versa.

Reflect

How would you stand to benefit from having time set aside and a quiet space to think, to regather thoughts, and to pray? What are some obstacles that prevent you from making this a priority in your life?

b. Jesus Demonstrated Complete Trust and Dependence Upon the Father

When Jesus prayed, he did not ignore or deny the sovereignty of God. He modeled complete trust and dependence upon the Father. This is obvious in

⁴ John Piper, *When I Don't Desire God*, 158.

Disciple Making Studies for the Church

several of his prayers, particularly in his prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39–44; Mark 14:35–39; Luke 22:41–45). Jesus fell to the ground and prayed that, if possible, the hour might pass from him (Mark 14:35). Even though Jesus knew his death had been foreordained by God, He still made the effort and requested of his Father that the cup might pass from him.

Reflect

What are some ways you've demonstrated dependence upon God over the past few months? In what ways did that involve prayer? How might time in prayer grow your trust in the Lord?

c. Jesus Prayed Truthfully and Accurately

Consider the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus, as it is called in John 17. There Jesus took the time to articulate with great specificity all that he desired God to do for those he came to save. He prayed according to what he knew the Father desired, drawing out great truths about their unique relationship as it would impact how the children of God would relate to him and to one another. And Jesus detailed what he aimed to accomplish according to the Father's will. His prayer was clear, focused, and theologically informed.

The expectation for God's people is not that they use fancy words or speak eloquently. However, we should learn from how Jesus petitioned his Father with clarity and truth. Instead of rushing our words and getting ahead of our thoughts, we should slow down and think. Are the words I am praying aligned with Scripture? Do I truly believe what I am saying? Prayer involves more than the cognitive, but certainly not less. As Jesus said, we are to worship in both spirit and truth (John 4:23), and Paul commends the spiritual and mindful prayer (1 Corinthians 14:15). Slow down and be neither heartless nor mindless in your prayers. Be passionate, intentional, and precise.

WHY WE PRAY

Reflect

How often is prayer merely a box to check? Is your time in prayer rushed? Is your mind focused on what is true? Are your words precise to the Father's will? Is your heart and mind being guided by Scripture?

3. God Responds to Prayer

The third reason we pray is because God responds to prayer. Jesus said,⁷ *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened”* (Matthew 7:7–8). When we ask, God responds. There is a clear connection between seeking things from God and receiving them.

Scripture is filled with examples of God granting his people what they have requested in their prayers. In Exodus 32:10, God told Moses of his intentions to destroy the people of Israel because of their idolatry. But Moses prayed on Israel's behalf, and in response to his prayer God relented and did not destroy them. In 2 Kings 20: 1–6, Hezekiah was sick unto death and, to make matters worse, God sent Isaiah to inform Hezekiah of his impending death. When Hezekiah received the message, he turned his face to the wall and prayed to God, recounting how he had walked with him in his youth. God responded to his prayer and added 15 years to Hezekiah's life. And James tells us, God responded to the earnest prayers of Elijah in both initiating and ending a three-and-a-half-year drought (James 5:17–18).

While God's sovereignty is acknowledged in answering our prayers, it must also be acknowledged that “the effective prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working” (James 5:16). In fact, immediately after answering the question of how to pray in Luke 11:2–4, Jesus goes on to answer the question of why to pray, giving two reasons — because God rewards diligence in prayer by responding to us when we pray, and because God delights in giving good gifts to his children.

Disciple Making Studies for the Church

To prevent any discouragement in praying, Jesus reminds us of God's great fatherly willingness to answer our prayers. In fact, God's willingness to answer our prayers exceeds our willingness to give good and necessary gifts to our children. God's ability, goodness, and perfection exceed our human frailty and sinfulness, and in that we can rejoice!

Reflect

Do you trust that God desires to bless you, grow you, provide for you, and conform you into the image of his Son? Do you willingly trust that what God desires for you is what you will be most satisfied to have?

4. Prayer Is a Means by Which God Accomplishes His Will

Still, we need to address the tension between how God brings all things to pass according to the counsel of his sovereign will and how the prayers of the righteous have impact on the events of history. However, what seems to be a contradiction completely disappears when we see that God not only decrees the end from the beginning, but also *the means by which the end is reached*. In other words, the "all things" which God works out "according to the counsel of his will" (Ephesians 1:11), includes the means that he uses to bring about his ultimate purpose.

John Piper describes how this happens in everyday life experiences.

"Prayer is one of the great wonders that God has given to the world. That God would plan for his own sovereign hand to be moved by the prayers of his creatures is amazing. It is a thoughtless objection to say, 'There's no point in praying, since God has all things planned anyway.' . . . God has planned millions of human acts everyday that cause other acts to happen."⁵ The point is, the means are built into, or assumed in what you want to accomplish. Piper goes on to say, "A nail sinks into a board because God planned for a hammer to

WHY WE PRAY

hit it. A student makes an A on a test because God planned for the student to study. A jet flies from New York to Los Angeles because God planned for fuel to be available, wings to stay put, engines to thrust, and a pilot to know what they are doing. In none of these cases do we say that the cause was pointless — the hammer, the studying, the fuel, the wing, the engine, the pilot.”⁶

In the same way, when we desire something according to God’s will, we ask our good and loving Father, recognizing that prayer is the means through which God will bring about change and purpose in life.

Here are a few biblical examples. Consider Genesis 20, when Abraham lied and told King Abimelech that Sarah was his sister, and Abimelech took Sarah as one of his wives. In response, God closed all the wombs of the household of Abimelech and threatened the king with further judgment if he did not return Sarah to Abraham. However, when God warned Abimelech of this judgment, he also told him, *“Abraham is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you will live.”* In other words, God revealed to Abimelech that his plan was for Abraham to pray and intercede for him that the judgment would be removed. *“Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children”* (Genesis 20:17).

Also consider the Book of Job, God addresses Job’s friend, Eliphaz, saying, *“My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves. And my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly”* (Job 42:7–8). And in verse 9, God accepted the prayer of Job on behalf of his friends.

Lastly, God ordained prayer as the means by which Israel’s future restoration would occur. In Jeremiah 29:11, God told Israel that he knew the plans he had for her. He continued by telling Israel that he had *plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope*. What will happen in the future when God’s plan for Israel comes to pass? He continued:

⁵ John Piper, *Providence* (Crossway Publishing, Wheaton, Ill. 2020), 707.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 707.

Disciple Making Studies for the Church

¹²Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. ¹³You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile. (vv. 12–14)

God will restore his people in response to their prayers, but these prayers — rather than being an intrusion into God’s plan— are actually part of God’s plan. Prayer then should not be thought of as attempts to alter God’s purposes, but rather as part of his ordained plan to bring about those purposes.

Finally, we remember how Jesus taught his disciples how prayer relates to the Great Commission and reaching the lost. *“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”* (Matthew 9:37–38) There is a unique connection between prayer and the task of evangelism. Firstly, notice that Jesus refers to the harvest as belonging to the Father — *his harvest*. Secondly, there is a direct connection between earnest prayer and laborers being sent out. This connection between prayer and evangelism recognizes God’s sovereignty in salvation, and our responsibility to act according to the plan of his salvation. J.I. Packer writes, *“When you pray for unconverted people, you do so on the assumption that it is in God’s power to bring them to faith. You entreat Him to do that very thing, and your confidence in asking rests upon the certainty that He is able to do what you ask.”*⁷

Reflect

Knowledge of God’s sovereignty is meant to enhance our prayers, not hinder them, and provide an intellectual work around. How might a fuller understanding of God’s sovereignty enhance your prayer life?

⁷ J.I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Intervarsity Press, Downer Grove, Ill. 1991), 15.

WHY WE PRAY

5. We Fellowship and Enjoy God When We Pray

We can only fellowship and enjoy God through the power of the gospel. One of many changes the gospel affords us as the children of God is moving our prayer life from merely petitioning God to engaging him in fellowship and the praise of his glory. Paul writes, “*And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ So, you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.*” (Galatians 4:6–7) Your prayer life reveals how much you really want communion with God and how much you really depend on him. The gospel awakens us to this faith and to this communion — so that prayer becomes the basic shape of our everyday walk with God.

When we believe the gospel, we legally become God’s children and receive the Spirit in order to express our position in his family. Being part of the family is not simply *being aware* that we are, it is experiencing that we are, through our fellowship with God. And according to verses 8–9 of that same chapter, that is what it means to know God.⁸

a. Praying with Gospel Power

Without gospel power, prayer is “light with no heat” — lots of requests, long lists, lots of scripture reciting. When we are done, we are more anxious than before because God is not being worshipped and enjoyed, he is being used. We need a new perspective on our needs and problems. We must first pray and recognize that what we think we want and what we think we need is not our Savior, therefore it will not rescue us because it is not God. We should pray into ourselves that God is our Father and wants to give us good things, so we can ask with confidence. This is the difference between our prayers being centered on the gospel versus our prayers sounding like anxious petitioning. Our desires are always idolatrous to some degree, so we need to give our petitions a gospel perspective.

Without gospel power, prayer is “heat with no light” — lots of fire and passion, lots of repetition, with an overt attention to form. It focuses on boldly claiming things in the name of Christ. Again, we are more anxious than before because we are not worshipping and enjoying God, but rather we are making an attempt to manipulate Him.

⁸Michael Reeves, *Enjoy Your Prayer Life*, 9

Disciple Making Studies for the Church

b. Fellowship with God Through Meditation

Meditation is a crossing of two disciplines: Bible study and prayer. And it is not just moving from one to another. It is a blending of them. Meditation is not like reading a work email. Meditation is like reading a love letter. When we fall in love and are getting to know our significant other, there is a heightened sense of all things. The words written in a love letter invade both our heart and mind. We don't just cerebrally know the words that are written. Instead, we experience a deep connection to them, a feeling of love and understanding, leaving a desire to know more.

Incorporating Bible study together with prayer works God's will into the framework of our thinking and believing. The result is an outflow of worship, where loving and obeying God becomes natural and synonymous. Where Christ is a friend, his word is our home, and in the power of his Spirit we draw near to the Father.

Reflect

To read and understand the Bible is to understand God's will for your life. How often do you incorporate Bible passages into your prayer life?

6. We Pray as a Way to Engage and Minister to the Body of Christ

One of the unique aspects of our gospel identity is the connection we have with other believers. The ability to pray for and with another believer is characteristic of the family life we enjoy in Christ. We have the same Father, according to the work of the same Savior, through the power of the same indwelling Spirit; this all highlights the unity we experience as Christ-followers. Intercession is the altruistic aspect of prayer. It assumes unique and unfettered access on behalf of another person. The idea behind intercessory prayer is to freely draw near on behalf of another person. We are like children who have open access to their

WHY WE PRAY

father, so we may approach and make a petition on behalf of someone we love. Intercessory prayer with and for God's people accomplishes many things. Here are a few examples:

a. Intercessory Prayer Increases Our Awareness of the Unity We Have in Christ

Dedicating ourselves to think and verbalize requests to the Father on behalf of others, forces us to recognize the power that holds us together. In that recognition, we acknowledge that God is also the Father of those we pray for, that Jesus is also their Savior, and they are indwelt by the same Spirit. And as we hear ourselves making requests on behalf of brothers and sisters, we identify that our words are exactly how we would pray for ourselves and would want others to pray for us. We acknowledge that prayer is part of the means by which God will involve Himself in the lives of those we love.

b. Intercessory Prayer Enhances Our Love for Our Brothers and Sisters in Christ

When we pray for others, we gain a deeper perspective into their lives. Hearing particular prayer requests or recognizing specific needs breaks through the walls of superficiality that would otherwise prevent us from moving closer. Our prayers cause us to draw near, have access, and make requests to the Father. And nothing pleases a father more than when his children love one another and look after each other's needs.

c. Intercessory Prayer Grows Our Sense of Responsibility for One Another

Our culture gives high praise to independence and individuality. When properly understood these ideas are a blessing to any society, but when sinfully embraced these social features can be harmful in making us blind to the needs of others. The greatest blessing of our adoption is gaining Christ, and with him eternal life. The second greatest blessing is summed up in 1 John 1:7, "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*" Did you catch that? Being covered by the blood of Jesus and walking in the light brings us fellowship with one another! Paul said in Galatians 6:2, "*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*" Before the physical act of serving one another, prayer for each other is the first step by which we care for one another's burdens. God gave us to one another so we would help each other get to heaven to see Jesus! To divorce the Christian life from other Christians is to be bereft of the fullest measure of Christ this side of heaven.

Disciple Making Studies for the Church

d. Intercessory Prayer Keeps Our Hearts Humble and Prepared to Forgive

It is hard to be focused on self when all our effort is aimed toward the Lord on behalf of another person. Regularly praying for others develops a selfless rhythm within us, whereby we enjoy the freedom of others-focused living. The less we think on ourselves the less inclined we are to take up an offense and trumpet our own self-importance. Praying for others audibly forces us to consider the needs and interests of others before our own. No one modeled this better than the Lord, as Paul reminds us in Philippians 2:6–8, “*Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*” We feel closest to the heart of Christ when we live our lives in the direction of other people. Following Jesus means we want to be like him, so we must recognize we are most unlike him when we elevate ourselves over others.

Reflect

When you pray, how much is devoted to the needs of others? Praying with and for God’s people implies relationship with them. How would you rate your relationships with people in the Grace Baptist family? Healthy? Unhealthy? Non-existent?

Conclusion

Though prayer is a mystery, it is one of the three chosen means by which God’s people fellowship with him and with one another. The word of God, the gathered church, and *prayer* all work in concert to bring significance to the fellowship of believers (Acts 2:42). We don’t have to completely understand how prayer works with God’s sovereignty to understand that it is a privilege to be able to call him Father and in the power of the Spirit, through the Son, open our mouths and communicate to the all-knowing, ever-listening, loving Father.

WHY WE PRAY

A Puritan Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Teach me to live by prayer as well as by providence, for myself, my family, and my church; give me a heart that can be shaped to your will so I might live in prayer, and honor you, being kept from evil, known and unknown.

Help me to see the sin that accompanies all I do, and the good I can extract from everything.

Let me know that the work of prayer is to bring my will to yours, and that without this it is pointless to pray; when I try to bring your will to mine, I am commanding Christ, to be above him, and wiser than he: This is my sin and pride.

I can only succeed when I pray according to your precepts and promises, and to pray in a way that pleases you, according to your sovereign will.

When you command me to pray for forgiveness, peace, and brokenness, it is because you will give me what you promised, for your glory, as well as for my good.

Help me not only desire small things but with holy boldness to desire great things for your people and for myself, that we all would live to show your glory.

Teach me that it is wise for me to pray for all I have out of love, willingly, not out of necessity; that I can come to you at any time, to lay open my needs acceptably to you; that my great sin lies in not remembering the pleasure of your ways; that the remembrance of this truth is one way to sense your presence; that there is no wrath like the wrath being governed by my own lusts for my own ends.

Strengthen me to not let you rest until Christ reigns supreme within me, in every thought, word, and deed, in a faith that purifies my heart, overcomes the world, works by love, fastens me to you, and always clings to the cross. Amen.

⁹ Arthur Bennett, ed. *Valley of Vision: Living by Prayer* (Versa Press, Inc., East Peoria, Ill), 147.

¹⁰ *Valley of Vision: Meeting with God*, 148.

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